



Assistance and Support Services for Family Caregivers

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National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) Report Caregivers of Veterans – Serving on the Homefront

- 80% live with the care recipient (23% non-VA caregivers)
- 30% caregiving 10 years or more (15%)
- 70% Veteran has mental illness or PTSD (28%)
- 68% high emotional stress (31%)
- 40% high physical strain (higher for women than men)
- 47% stopped working (9%)
- 50% high financial hardship (13%)

***Caregivers of Veterans – Serving on the Homefront**

Study Released November, 2010

National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) Report Caregivers of Veterans – Serving on the Homefront (contd.)

Physical and Emotional Impact on Caregiver:

- Increased stress or anxiety
- Sleep deprivation
- Less time exercising
- Poor eating habits
- Weight gain or loss
- Depression
- Delaying own health care



Areas of Concern for Rural Caregivers

- Limited use and availability of services in rural areas
- Significant impact of caregiving on rural workplaces
- Financial hardship
- Stress of rural caregiving
- Level of availability and concerns regarding use of Internet
- Prevalence of disability related to incidents in farming and ranching operations
- Current and increasing number of Veterans in need of care in rural areas

Caregiving in Tribal Communities

- Family members provide an estimated 90% of long term care
- Care of elder part of ancient custom and tradition
- Caregiver terminology unfamiliar - people do not identify as 'caregivers' so don't seek services
- Lack of culturally competent training and resources
- Significant risk for decline in physical and psychological health
- Limited resources
- High prevalence of chronic disease



Comprehensive Caregiver Support Services

- Allow Veterans to remain at home in the community
- Address specific needs of Family Caregivers with a menu of programs and services
- Promote Veteran & Caregiver health and well-being
- Provide one location to obtain needed information
- Provide training & information on common conditions
- Reduce isolation with professional & peer support
- Provide options to give Caregivers respite
- Sensitize health care providers to the Caregivers' role

Menu of VA Services

In-Home Care

- Skilled Nursing
- Home Health Aide
- Home Based Primary Care
- Veteran Directed Home & Community Based Care

Respite Care

Services to Address

- Equipment
- Home Modification
- Automobile Modification

Education and Training

Financial Support

- Aid and Attendance
- Caregiver Stipend (Post 9-11)

Information and Referral

- Caregiver Web site: www.caregiver.va.gov
- Caregiver Support Line

Caregiver Support

- Support Groups
- Caregiver Support Coordinators
- Interactive Website
- Peer Mentoring Program



Public Law 111-163 Signed Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act



Caregiver Support Program Current Data (May 9, 2011 – July 3, 2012)

- Applications filed: 8,428
- Approved Applications: 5,056
- 4,483 stipends paid for month of May
 - over \$49 million in stipend expenditures total to date
- New Healthcare Coverage enrollees: 1,146
- Caregiver Demographics:
 - Sex: 92% women
 - Relationship: spouses (72%), parents (12%)
 - Age: 26-40 yrs old (51%), 41-64 years old (38%)

Current vs. New Caregiver Benefits

Current Benefits

Available to Veterans of All Eras

World War II

Korean

Vietnam

Gulf War

Post-9/11-----

- Education and Training
- Family Support Services
- In-Home Care
- 30 Days of Respite Care
- Aid and Attendance
- Additional Benefits

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Additional Benefits under P.L. 111-163

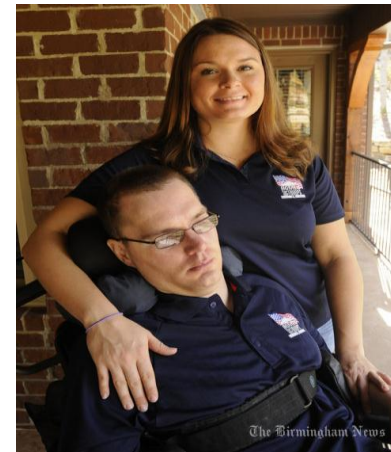
Available to subset of post-9/11 Veterans and Servicemembers

Primary Caregivers Receive:

- Stipend paid to Family Caregiver
- Health care coverage (if not otherwise available)
- Mental health services
- Comprehensive instruction and training
- Travel, lodging and per diem for training
- Enhanced respite care
- Lodging and subsistence for Veteran's appointments at VA

Caregiver Support Coordinators

- At all VA medical centers
- Clinical experts on Caregiver issues
- Knowledgeable about VA and non-VA resources
- Assist with application for new benefits
- Organize Caregiver focused activities and services
- Ensure Caregiver sensitivity is integrated into all programs
- Provide National Caregiver Support Line follow-up
- Establish programming for National Family Caregiver Month in November



Eligibility Criteria - A Snapshot

Veteran or Servicemember undergoing medical discharge incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or after September 11, 2001 (includes Traumatic Brain Injury, psychological trauma or other mental disorders).

and

Veteran or Servicemember requires on-going assistance from a Caregiver for a minimum of 6 months to:

1. Support the Veteran or Servicemember's health and well-being;
2. Perform personal functions required in everyday living; **and**
3. Ensure the Veteran or Servicemember remains safe from hazards or dangers incident to his or her daily environment.

*****Note: there are additional criteria beyond what is listed here.***

Primary Family Caregiver Benefits

- **Stipend**
 - Direct payment to primary Family Caregiver
 - Centrally funded and managed
 - Based on wages of a home health aide in the geographic area where the Veteran resides
 - Tiered based on amount and degree of personal care services provided
- **Healthcare Coverage**
 - CHAMPVA - VA healthcare coverage for non-Veterans
- **Travel, Lodging and Per Diem**
 - Integrated into existing beneficiary travel program
- **Mental Health Services**
 - Individual/Group psychotherapy and counseling

Caregiver Education and Training

Standardized Core Curriculum

- Developed in collaboration with Easter Seals
- In-person, workbook/DVD, or web-based
- Includes modules on:
 - Caregiver Self-Care
 - Home Safety
 - Basic Caregiver Skills (vital signs, etc)
 - Providing Personal Care
 - Managing Challenging Behaviors
 - Resources (legal, financial, VA, community, advocacy)



Training Data Update:

- More than 5,700 Family Caregivers have completed training to date
- 205 Family Caregivers have attended classroom training
- More than 2,700 Family Caregivers have completed online training

On-going Support to Veteran & Caregiver

- In-Home initial visit by VA Clinicians
- Well-being checks every 90 days or as clinically indicated
- Home visits are supportive and instructive
- Evaluation of Veteran and Caregiver's physical and emotional well-being
- Recommendations for additional training, support, equipment, etc.

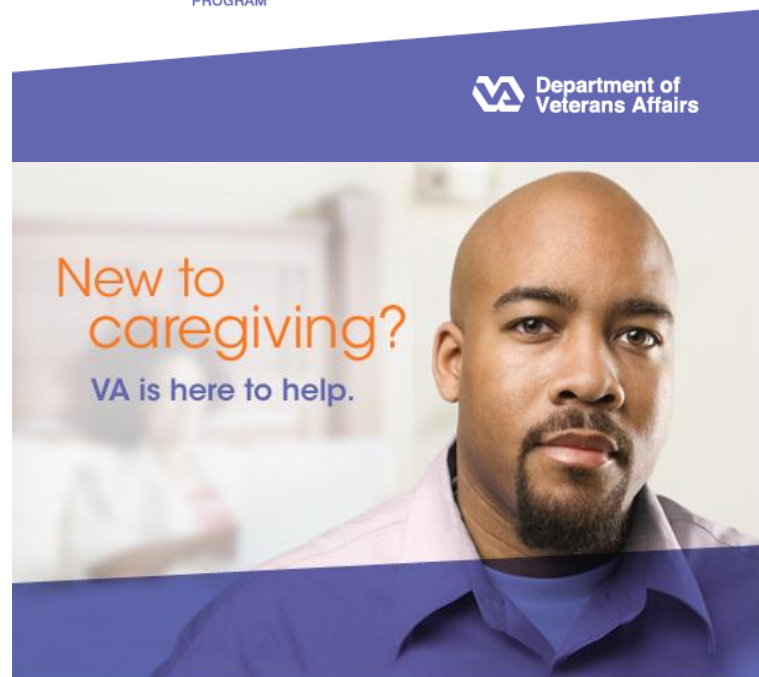
Outreach to Caregivers - Support Line

- Over 42,000 calls received to date
- Averaging 100-150 calls per day
- Staffed by licensed social workers
- 24/7 coverage
- Follow-up provided by local Caregiver Support Coordinators
- Consistently positive comments and appreciation from Caregivers



Call VA's Caregiver Support Line
toll-free today.

1-855-260-3274



Outreach to Caregivers - Website

- Provides zip code based interactive Caregiver Support Coordinator locator
- Contact info for Support Line
- “Caregiver Toolbox”
- Caregiver “connections” with stories from peer Caregivers
- Link to application for new benefits/services with live chat support
- Averaging more than 900 hits per day with 3 pages viewed during a visit



www.caregiver.va.gov

Caregiver Education and Training

Expanding Evidence –Based Best Practices

REACH VA

- Designed to provide education support, and teach problem-solving for Caregivers of Veterans with Alzheimer's Disease/dementia
- Modified for use with Caregivers of Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury
- Currently available at 39 sites, with additional sites in training
- Modifications underway to use more targeted intervention for a shorter period of time, allowing for larger scale implementation

Spouse /Caregiver Telephone Support

- Launched December 2011
- Groups of Post 9/11 spouses meet with a VA clinician
- Program includes problem solving skills, resiliency training, and support
- Modeled after the Army Spouse Battlemind Program
- Currently available at more than 38 VA sites, with additional sites added monthly

Caregiver Training in Development

Building Better Caregivers

- An interactive, web based workshop developed by Stanford University to be launched by VA Caregiver Support Program in Fall 2012
- Workshop is designed to provide education, support and teach problem solving to Caregivers of Veterans of all eras
- Trained moderators facilitate the program and courses
- Six week workshop topics include: stress management, difficult behaviors, sleep, healthy eating, exercise, difficult emotions for both the care recipient and Caregiver, decision making, resources and planning for the future

PTSD Training for Caregivers

- In partnership with National Center for PTSD
- Live training via satellite with Caregivers participating in VA medical centers across the country to be held August 2012

Caregiver Support

Peer Support Mentoring Program

- Launched January 2012
- New Caregivers are matched to more experienced Caregivers
- Mentors are registered volunteers at their local VA
- Mentors receive additional orientation and on-going support from the National Peer Support Mentoring Program Manager
- Caregiver Mentor/Caregiver dyads are evaluated regularly by the local Caregiver Support Coordinators and the Peer Support Mentoring Program Manager to ensure successful matches
- 13 Peer Mentor/Caregiver dyads are underway with 5 additional Mentors in training
- Anticipate 25 peer mentor/caregiver dyads by the end of FY12

Caregiver Support (cont.)

National Family Caregiver Month (November)

- In November 2011, more than 1,700 events celebrating VA Family Caregivers were held across the country at VA sites
- More than 13,000 Family Caregivers participated
- Planning underway for November 2012 events

Caregiver Support Line Enhanced Support Pilot

- Caregiver referrals from CSC to CSL for time limited case management services
- Services include emotional support, Education, problem solving, linkage to resources
- CSC and CSL social worker partner to address Caregiver needs
- Pilot rolled out Spring 2012

Collaboration and Partnership

VA's Medication Reconciliation Initiative

- Medication safety materials posted on Caregiver Website and used in Caregiver training
- Collaborated for National Family Caregiver Month to provide local outreach events around topic of medication safety
- Developing training for all VA Providers with focus on the role of Family Caregiver in medication management and reconciliation held May 2012

VA's Office of Informatics and Analytics

- VA Mobile Health Family Caregiver Pilot
 - Hand-held device with applications relevant to Family Caregiving
 - Caregivers have participated in Focus Groups and usability testing at VA sites across the country
 - Anticipate distribution of hand held devices in Fall 2012

VA Caregiver Support Program - Feedback from Family Caregivers

“This was the most painless process I have ever gone through that has been associated with my husband’s military career or medical care.”

A Caregiver arrived at an Easter Seals classroom training quite angry and frustrated with the VA. By the end of the class, she believed that the class should be mandatory and described her experience as “soul cleansing.”

“I have been very excited to be a part of this new team of caregivers. It is so wonderful to be able to have others to communicate with who are aware of the joys and struggles of caring for brain injured veterans...Thank you for easing our fears and showing us a greater compassion that is so needed these days.”

VA Caregiver Support Program - Feedback from Family Caregivers (Continued)

"I just have to tell you, that if it were not for the Caregiver program, my husband would NOT be going to inpatient treatment. He would not. This is all very exciting (and scary) for us, but at least now, we don't have worry SO MUCH about losing our house, bills, food, etc. It is absolutely attributed to the Caregiver program."

"Immediately they felt like allies. ...I had more support and I felt so validated.....finally, I wasn't alone any more, finally I have a support system."

"Now is our chance to have our voices heard by people who are actually listening."

Questions?

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